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Amendment to the Specification

In the specification, please replace paragraph 54 with the following amended paragraph:

FIG. 2b illustrates an alternative embodiment, where the merchant 200 system is configured to maintain active control of the user 1 browser during the authentication and STN generation process. This may be desired by some merchants who do not want to send a user 1 to a host system 300 out of concern, for example, that they may lose that valued consumer. The merchant 200 system in this embodiment is configured to act as a throughput of information between the user 1 and the host system 300. As depicted in FIG. 2b, the user 1 selects products or services to purchase from a merchant website 210 (STEP 401). The merchant 200 detects the smart card reader 12 on the user 1 device 10 and displays the smart card button 218 (STEP 422). The user 1 then chooses to use the smart card payment system by selecting the smart card button 218 (STEP 423). The Merchant 200 calls the host system 300 using a secure and authenticated channel (e.g., SSL) to retrieve a challenge (e.g., to insert card and enter PIN) from the host system (STEP 424). This challenge is passed along to the user 1 (STEP 425) within a merchant authentication web page 320. The user 1 inserts the smart card 14 and enters the proper PIN in the appropriate authentication field 321 (STEP 426). A signed challenge string and a digital certificate are is passed to the merchant 200 and on to the host system (STEP 427). The host system 300 authenticates the user 1, identifies the user's account information, and if more than one user account is available, provides the user the ability to select from multiple accounts on the merchant's account selection page 322. For example, the user 1 may be presented with a list of the last four digits of the available account numbers. A STN is generated and associated with the selected user 1 account in a host system 300 STN database. During settlement, the actual user 1 account number is resubstituted for the STN and processed for payment and invoicing. The STN is provided (along with other transaction data if desired) directly to the merchant 200 (STEP 428). The initial transaction is completed when the merchant 200 accepts the secondary transaction number (and other transaction data) from the host system 300 and notifies the user 1 (STEP 429).